

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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THE SOURCE EVALUATIONS IN THIS REPORT ARE DEFINITIVE.
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Reaction to Foreign Broadcasts

1. The French broadcasts are found by the Bulgarian people to be most interesting as far as news is concerned, but they are almost always jammed and hence unintelligible.
2. VOA is also quite jammed but the beginning of the broadcasts are audible. These broadcasts are not sufficiently "serious" to make a great impression on the Bulgarian people and influence their political views. The news editors do not know how to make use of the facts at their disposal, and the programs are not as pleasing to the Bulgarian listener as they could be. One exception is the lectures on health given by Dr. Zdravkov once a week.
3. BBC is most popular in Bulgaria since even Communists listen to it regularly. Its popularity extends beyond Bulgarian-language programs. If people have not a radio of their own, they visit friends in order to listen to BBC broadcasts, which are much superior to VOA broadcasts. "Thanks to the BBC that political propaganda spread by the Communist regime is to a great measure deflated". BBC programs for Bulgaria could also be improved in quality, but the errors are few.

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Social, Economic, Political Conditions in Bulgaria

6. Attached is a 12-page report which discusses political conditions in Bulgaria after 1944, sociological conditions in general, and recent economic conditions. Some of the specific topics which, however, are discussed in general terms only are:

- a. DOSO (Voluntary Organization for Defense Cooperation);
- b. Sports;
- c. Sketchy military information, including the statement that the government issued an order to the effect that no vacancies be filled until all discharged officers have found work, [redacted] an indication of serious unemployment.
- d. Education; and
- e. Criticism of the low-level scientific work now being done in Bulgaria;

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15. In regard to France, the present regime believes the socialist faction within the French government is making considerable progress. The Bulgarian people believe that the French are aware of the fact that there is nothing in common between communism and socialism and that the socialist leaders in France today are well aware of the danger the communist party represents in the country. They believe that the French socialists have learned a lesson from the way the Bulgarian socialists have been treated by the communists since 1947. Bulgarian socialist leaders such as Kosta LULTECHEV, aged seventy-five, and Dr. Peter DERTLIEV, aged fifty, are still in prison. Krustu PAST CHOV and many other socialist leaders have died in prison, dying as martyrs for true socialism.
16. The Bulgarian people have a great sympathy for Marshal Tito because of the independence he has shown vis-a-vis Russia. They honestly hope for a Balkan Federation which will save them from their present situation. The peasants, particularly, believe that a Balkan Federation will mean the end of the kolkhos.
17. Allied Radio Broadcasts. The Bulgarian people consider the French radio the most interesting from the news point of view, although it must be said that their broadcasts are nearly always jammed to the point where they are unintelligible. The Voice of America is also heavily jammed but it is generally possible to hear the beginnings of the broadcasts. In regard to their quality, particularly from a political point of view, they are not considered sufficiently serious to make a great impression in Bulgaria. It is evident that the news editors do not know how to use the facts at their disposal and the programs do not suit the preference of the Bulgarian listeners. The one exception is possibly the lectures on health given by Dr. ZDRAVCOV once a week. [redacted] of all the broadcasts, the Bulgarian people prefer to listen to those of the BBC, and not only in the Bulgarian language. Even communists in the regime listen to BBC regularly. When people have no radio of their own, they generally try to visit their most trusted friends at the hours of broadcasts. They find the quality of BBC infinitely superior to that of Voice of America. It is not an exaggeration to say that, thanks to the BBC, the political propaganda spread by the communist regime is to a great measure deflated. Of course, BBC Bulgarian broadcasts also could be improved in quality but its errors are few. It is a great mistake that the excellent American foreign policy towards the enslaved nations is not explained more fully to the people behind the Iron Curtain through the Voice of America. Its messages generally lack the reality which is necessary today to be effective on the Bulgarian people.

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[redacted] The Fatherland Front which the regime claims to be a "voluntary organization" is in fact, due to the privileges which it offers its members, the entree to any kind of a decent life within the country. To find a job, to enter the university, to receive anything but the most basic necessities

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of existence, it is necessary to join this organization. It goes without saying that the organization is entirely dominated by the communists. Meetings are held, but no one dares raise any subject which might be frowned upon by the regime. The meetings consist only of communist speakers. The audience generally talks amongst themselves, sleeps, and just waits until the end of the meeting. The Fatherland Front is used as a means to mobilize the masses for various demonstrations and manifestations. The Union of Dimitrov Youth is another so-called "voluntary organization." Its main purpose is to educate the youth in communist ideals and teachings. It is nearly indispensable for a young person to belong to this organization in order to complete his schooling and, afterwards, obtain work in line with his training. Ninety-five percent of its members consider the entire organization a joke, but it is publicly presented by the regime as a free, sincere expression on the part of the youth to learn the communists' principles as laid down by the leaders.

19. DOSO. The DOSO, the voluntary organization for defense, comprises nearly the entire membership of the Fatherland Front, the Union of Dimitrov Youth, and various other front organizations. It is a semi-military organization but its members are only instructed in military tactics. Membership in this organization is obligatory for all high school and university students, both male and female. There are permanent sections of the DOSO for air defense and recently there has been added a section for atomic defense.
20. Sports Activities. Various sports organizations have been created by the government in order that the youth and people up to fifty years of age train and keep themselves physically fit in case of war or emergency. The leading sports teams, however, are all professional and their members enjoy exceptional educational opportunities and similar privileges. The regime considers that sports activities are one of the principal means for disseminating communist propaganda.
21. The Army. The Bulgarian Army is formed by a cadre of the most reliable younger elements in the country. Young men of draft age whose allegiance to the regime is particularly in doubt are assigned to labor groups rather than the regular army. Army discipline is exceedingly strict and modeled after that of the Soviet Union. The majority of the officers are former laborers and peasants with little education. They are urged to attend special educational courses organized within the army. Several months ago (probably early spring) there was a partial demobilization, with about 18,000 officers and men being discharged. At the time, an order from the government was sent around to all the ministries stipulating that no vacancies be filled until all the demobilized officers of this group had found jobs. This is indicative of the serious unemployment situation which currently exists in Bulgaria.
22. Economic Conditions. Probably the most striking example of the failure of the communist regime is the lamentable economic situation in the country. The average daily pay of a worker is 18 leva. According to a survey made by the

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trustees of the Dimitrov Youth of the Parlevet section under D. BLAGOV, a minimum of 1,200 leva per month was necessary to support an unmarried worker in an ordinary manner. The standard of living may be judged from the following facts: There has been little change in prices since before the war. However, at that time a modest government employee with a salary of 1200-1600 leva was able to live comfortably, educate his children, and save for a small home. It is true that at that time there were certain extra incomes from private property, extra work, etc. Dimitar R., an old municipal employee of the city government of Sofia, told me that before the war, he was able to increase his salary approximately one-third from outside work and accounting. Such was the case with most office workers, although they had satisfactory salaries from their employment. Various outside work would permit the worker to pay for health insurance and a modest vacation for himself and family. In case of unemployment, he was able to obtain from one-third to one-half of his salary as a dole. He worked freely and was not obliged to fulfill norms which are today constantly being raised. Today the workers are not allowed to strike nor do they receive any financial assistance when unemployed. They have a vacation of only fourteen days annually and only workers with five years or more of service obtain sickness benefits of 100 percent of their salary. The worker is not permitted to change jobs at will. It was my daily experience to hear from mothers, workers, policemen, office employees, etc. that they starved, that their children degenerated because of lack of money to buy food, etc.

23. At the time of the detente in the Soviet Union, the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party instructed the lower communist organizations to listen to the complaints of their members and forward these complaints to the higher party headquarters. Members were invited to state frankly how they live, what they feel, and what they want. Later, several communists told me that the complaints regarding the miseries in which the Bulgarian people live due to abuses in bureaucracy and management were unbelievable. Dobri TERPANEV, former minister and member of the Central Committee, as well as Entcho STANKOV, now secretary of the party and member of the Central Committee, acknowledge that after the last eight years of the communist regime, the party still does not have the support of the people, that this to a great extent is the fault of the party members who have neglected the material needs of the people and to a great extent have divorced themselves from the people. [redacted] during three meetings of the communist organization of Bulgarian writers, the accusations against the party leaders were severe. The opinion of the writers was nearly unanimous that the famine and misery existing in the country today was due to the communist leadership. After Russia spoke out against the "cult of the individual", open criticism against party leaders was held on all sides. In the past this type of criticism would have resulted in immediate arrests. Last winter a worker from the 9th of September Shoe Factory who took the local party secretary at his word when he asked for criticism, pointed out various abuses of power in the shoe factory. At the end of the meeting he was taken by the security forces and received a sentence of five years

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imprisonment for attempting to foment discontent among the workers.

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4. The seriousness of the economic condition in Bulgaria may be judged from a recent statement by YUGOV at a meeting of the Central Committee.

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YUGOV said, "Until now it was inadmissible to speak of unemployment in our country but we must acknowledge that in the larger cities there is considerable unemployment and it is the duty of the government to find work for these people." In the past the regime has practically ignored the unemployment problem. There are offices for registering the unemployed but their official name is "Office for the distribution of the working forces." These offices are constantly filled with unemployed people, some of whom wait months for any type of temporary job. If work is found for them, it is generally in a line altogether different from that of their chosen profession. The number of unemployed is not known for certain. YUGOV has admitted that it is 30,000 in Sofia, while according to other figures, it is much higher - between 90,000 and 100,000.

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the average per capita income of peasants in Bulgaria the average peasant makes 1.20 leva a day, in addition to a certain amount of farm products which he receives for his work. This is the reason that today the farms are worked mainly by women, old men, and children. The youth gravitates towards the cities where they hope to obtain employment in factories, mines, etc. Before the war peasant families who, although they had economic difficulties, always had yogurt in the house, were happy, and the children were content to remain on the farms.

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The miserable conditions of collective farm life have resulted in the complete failure of the regime's agrarian policies. There are no longer enough people on the farms to cultivate the earth properly.

26.

The salary of a first-class railway technician was about 700 leva per month. It is impossible for him to support his wife and two children on this salary. In February of 1956 a group of approximately 600 men and women met in one of the rooms of the Sofia railway station. The reason for this meeting was that they had

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been informed of an increase in the norms for the personnel paid by the kilometer and that there was no corresponding increase in their salary. After much discussion, it was decided that the workers would not move a train from Sofia unless the Minister of Transportation himself appeared at the meeting. Thirty minutes later, the Minister appeared and negotiations were begun. He urged that the workers sacrifice a little more for the happiness of their children. A locomotive fireman cried out, "Comrade Minister, when I started working here I weighed 80 kilos; now I weigh only 50. Look at what I have for lunch - a small piece of bread and some leeks. On this nurture I must shovel coal for 150 kilometers. At the same time look at yourself; you can't see your feet for your stomach, and then look at your clothes. When will there be an end of this starving and misery for us and for our children?" Gradually the criticism of this worker was taken up by the others until all present were shouting at the Minister. In order to leave the hall safely, the Minister made some vague promises and the men returned to work. Two days later, after many arrests had been made, a second meeting took place and the men refused to work before the men arrested were released.

27. [redacted] so-called price reductions in consumer goods in Bulgaria. These so-called reductions were even broadcast by BBC in Bulgaria. It is the general opinion of the more intelligent Bulgarians that these reductions in prices were but a maneuver on the part of the communist regime. First of all, immediately preceding the reductions the prices were gradually rising. After the reductions, the prices were the same as they were before the increase took place. Another practice of the regime is to announce reductions in the prices but then two or three weeks later to raise the prices of the goods back to their former levels. This is explained to the public by pointing out that the quality of the merchandise is superior and therefore should cost more. In at least 75 percent of the cases where reductions are made for certain merchandise, they rise again to their previous level within a few weeks. The announcement of price reductions may to a certain extent still complaints of the workers but it is of short duration.

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28. After the 20th Congress of the CPR, even Bulgarian communists in responsible positions began open criticism of the economic chaos in the country. They regarded the Soviet criticism of Stalin as a sign that all criticism would be tolerated in Bulgaria. Lower echelon communists openly discussed their criticism against the communist leaders for tolerating financial abuses of all kinds. High party officials are deeply concerned with this criticism by the lower echelons and consider it a serious threat to the regime. Another proof of this is that the Bulgarian regime itself has acknowledged that many salaries are too low and pensions inadequate. This declaration on the part of the government was made even after the recent reductions in prices. Families with any monetary or material savings have exhausted their reserves and in order to make ends meet have for the past few years been selling household furnishings and personal items.

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The main reasons for these dire economic conditions are as follows:

- a. Soviet Colonialism. The entire Bulgarian economy is geared to the interests of the Soviet Union. Prices the Soviet Union pays for various goods are low but the exact sums are kept secret by the government for fear of criticism on the part of the population. The Bulgarian-Soviet commercial organizations were run entirely in favor of the Soviet Union. Although they are now liquidated, the damage they have done still remains. A leading Bulgarian official of one of these organizations told me that through these joint organizations, the Russians laid hands on nearly all German reparations destined for Bulgaria. Today the Russians still control exploitation of the uranium mines of Bouhove about 30 or 40 kilometers from Sofia. A new uranium mine was discovered not long ago near the Rurilo railway station 15 kilometers north of Sofia. [redacted] this new mine is larger and richer in uranium than Bouhove. This mine is also exploited by the Russians but with Bulgarian laborers.
- b. The low quality of Soviet goods which are sent to Bulgaria. This shoddy material has disappointed all Bulgarian technicians. It is said that many of the machine tools are already broken down before they even reach Bulgaria after being transported from across the Black Sea and then by rail.
- c. The faulty economy of the Soviet regime itself.
- d. Corruption in the various ministries.
- e. The bureaucracy which stifles initiative.
- f. Passive resistance on the part of nearly the entire population.
- g. The scientific fields in Bulgaria are under the complete domination of the Soviet Union. A Bulgarian author is not even permitted to cite Western scientists as references. This may be done in the negative sense however. No one is allowed to undertake studies in the West. All courses and specializations are made in Russia and to a lesser extent in the other Iron Curtain countries. Scholarships, etc. are granted by the government only to those who are known to be sympathetic to the regime. The Russian language is a compulsory study for the entire student population. All political and historical textbooks are printed under the direction of Russian specialists and therefore written with a Russian bias. In spite of these propaganda efforts directed against the youth, students still maintain a critical attitude toward Russia. [redacted]

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[redacted] The same antipathy toward things Russian has led [redacted] to refuse to study pages and textbooks which they consider unfavorable to the Soviet regime. Higher education is in a state of stagnation. The younger professors often suffer from inadequate training and education. This is particularly true of those in the communist party who often become professors through party influence. Prior to the communist regime, professors from the cities were willing to take posts in the hinterland. Today the contrary is true. All life gravitates around the big cities and particularly Sofia. The government, however, is still spending large sums of money for new educational institutions. For instance, in the medical section of the University of Sofia there are five times more professors than before the war. Approximately 90 percent are communists. These new professors are generally ill-trained with no sense of social justice or scientific responsibility.

31. Scientific work under the communist regime is based on norms and plans. This stifles real initiative and activity. This pertains to all fields: medical, agricultural and educational. Those who do not fulfill their norms are considered as enemies. This forces the scientists to work faster than they are able and to shirk responsibility if it is possible. The effect of this system is already evident as witnessed by the poor quality of the scientists, even those who have studied in Russia. [redacted]

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32. The decadence of culture and of free political thought may be seen on all sides. A good illustration of this is the negligible accomplishments of Bulgarian writers since the war. Since 1944 only three works have received approval of the entire nation and they are works by non-communist authors: D. DINCOV who wrote Tobacco, St. DITCHEV who wrote Freedom, and D. TALEV who wrote A Triada. The last two authors dealt with subjects of Bulgarian history 50 or 100 years ago. [redacted] some [redacted] writers [redacted] have discontinued writing due to the censorship of the communist regime. Government control of writers was a subject of discussion at a recent meeting of the Bulgarian Writers Front. Two writers, D. VEJINOV and TOMALINSKY, openly stated that communist party efforts to control Bulgarian literature had stifled all initiative.

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33. Scientific work in the various new institutes of the Bulgarian Academy of Science is for the most part concentrated on investigations of the past. They examine minutely former writers, musicians, scientists, poets, etc. in order to determine whether or not their works are proper for study by the country today. [redacted]

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